

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the present application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain(s) under examination in the application is presented below. The claims are presented in ascending order and each includes one status identifier. Those claims not cancelled or withdrawn but amended by the current amendment utilize the following notations for amendment: 1. deleted matter is shown by strikethrough for six or more characters and double brackets for five or fewer characters; and 2. added matter is shown by underlining.

1. (Currently Amended) A dough intermediate comprising:

a dough intermediate having a shape intended to produce aesthetic features upon subjecting said dough intermediate to a finishing step, said aesthetic features created through stamping, cutting, slicing or combinations thereof to produce lobes, sections, portions or combinations thereof that are visible after said finishing step, the lobes, sections, portions, or combinations thereof formed by cuts extending from about ninety to about ninety-eight percent of a thickness of said dough intermediate; and

a sprayable plasticizing agent applied onto an entire exposed surface of said intermediate at least prior to said finishing step so as to substantially coat the entire exposed surface of said intermediate to form a sealing layer on said entire exposed surface of said dough intermediate including said aesthetic features formed during the finishing step, said sealing layer providing at least a partial seal on the entire exposed surface thereby increasing fluidity of the dough intermediate and restricting dehydration to aid in expansion,

wherein formation of the cuts in the dough intermediate enables said plasticizing agent to embed within fissures created between the lobes, sections, portions, or combinations thereof thereby increasing a taste experience, and

wherein, upon subjecting said dough intermediate to an intermediate heat or energy treatment step, and a refrigeration or freezing step after the intermediate heat or energy treatment step, said dough intermediate with said sealing layer yields an enhanced crown or cap volume of at least nine percent compared to a

dough intermediate without a plasticizing agent, and BSV of greater than 3 ml/g  
after ~~a final~~ the finishing step.

2. (Previously Presented) The dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said plasticizing agent is butter.
3. (Previously Presented) The dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said plasticizing agent is an oil.
4. (Previously Presented) The dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said plasticizing agent is a liquefied fat.
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Previously Presented) The dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said dough intermediate is partially baked and refrigerated or frozen prior to releasing said dough intermediate to a retail, wholesale or food service outlet.
7. (Previously Presented) The dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said finishing step is selected from the group that includes baking, frying, heating or combinations thereof.

8. (Previously Presented) The dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said finishing step is baking at a temperature between 325 and 400° F.

9. (Previously Presented) The dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said aesthetic features are lobes on the dough intermediate.

10. (Previously Presented) The dough intermediate as recited in claim 1, wherein said intermediate heat or energy treatment step is par-baking.

11. (Previously Presented) The dough intermediate as recited in claim 10, wherein said energy treatment is selected from a group including microwave, convection and radiant.

12. (Previously Presented) A method of preparing a dough intermediate having improved aesthetic and organoleptic properties upon subjecting the dough intermediate to a finishing step, comprising the steps of:

preparing a dough;

creating individual dough intermediates from said dough;

spraying a plasticizing agent to an entire exposed surface of said dough intermediate to form a sealing layer on the entire exposed surface of said dough intermediate;

providing a cutting force to said dough intermediate to form a plurality of lobes, sections, portions and the like, wherein the cutting force forms cuts

extending from about ninety to about ninety-eight percent of a thickness of the dough intermediate enabling said plasticizing agent to embed within fissures created between the lobes, sections, portions, or combinations thereof thereby increasing a taste experience;

treating said dough intermediate to a partial finishing step to create a partially baked dough intermediate;

refrigerating or freezing said dough intermediate;

delivering said partially baked dough intermediate to a retail, wholesale or food service outlet; and

subjecting said partially baked dough intermediate to a final finishing step so as to yield a baked product having improved organoleptic and aesthetic properties, an improved crown volume of at least nine percent compared to a dough intermediate without a plasticizing agent, and a baked specific volume of at least 3 ml/g.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 12, wherein said plasticizing agent is selected from the group including butter, oil, liquefied fat and combinations thereof.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 12, wherein said cutting force is a mechanical cutting force selected from a group including cutting, stamping, slicing or combinations thereof.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 12, wherein said cutting force is selected from a group including ultrasonic, laser, water or air jetting and combinations thereof.
16. (Previously Presented) The method of preparing a dough intermediate as recited in claim 12, including a further step of applying an additional coating of plasticizing agent to said partially baked dough intermediate after subjecting said partially baked dough intermediate to a final finishing step.
17. (Cancelled)
18. (Previously Presented) A par-baked, frozen or refrigerated dough intermediate having a baked specific volume of at least 3 ml/g, said intermediate having a sprayable sealing layer formed from a butter, oil liquefied fat or combinations thereof, said sealing layer sprayed substantially over an entire exposed surface of said dough intermediate and said sealing layer is introduced into centrally disposed cuts and crevices extending from about ninety to about ninety-eight percent of a thickness of the dough intermediate formed through cutting so as to coat lobes, sections or portions to be formed on said dough intermediate upon being subjected to a finishing step such that the sealing layer at least partially seals the entire exposed surface and said sealing layer improves dough fluidity and reduces dehydration of said dough intermediate, wherein the

dough intermediate has an improved crown volume of at least nine percent compared to a dough intermediate without a plasticizing agent.

19. (Withdrawn) A dough product having an enhanced Baked Specific Volume comprising:
  - a dough intermediate having a plasticizing agent applied to an external surface of said dough intermediate to form a plasticized layer on the external surface, wherein a baked product resulting from subjecting said dough intermediate to a heat or energy treatment step yields at least a 9% increase in Baked Specific Volume when compared to a dough product baked from another dough intermediate lacking a plasticized layer.
20. (Withdrawn) The dough product of claim 19, wherein the dough intermediate assumes a specific aesthetic shape following the heat or energy treatment step.
21. (Withdrawn) The dough product of claim 19, wherein the plasticizing agent is selected from the group consisting of a dairy fat, an animal fat, a vegetable oil and combinations thereof.
22. (Withdrawn) The dough product of claim 19, wherein the dough intermediate is partially baked.
23. (Withdrawn) The dough product of claim 19, wherein the dough intermediate is selected from the group consisting of a roll intermediate, a biscuit intermediate, a bun intermediate, a

cinnamon roll intermediate, a croissant intermediate, a muffin intermediate, a bread intermediate, a breadstick intermediate, a pizza crust intermediate and a pastry intermediate.

24. (Withdrawn) A method for preparing a dough product having an enhanced Baked Specific Volume comprising:

forming a dough intermediate,  
applying a plasticizing agent to an exterior portion of said dough intermediate to form a plasticized layer on the exterior portion; and  
baking said dough intermediate wherein the application of the plasticizing agent effects at least a 9% increase in Baked Specific Volume when compared to a dough intermediate which lacks a plasticized layer.

25. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, further comprising:

shaping the dough intermediate to a desired aesthetic shape wherein the plasticizing agent is embedded within fissures formed on the exterior portion of the dough intermediate.

26. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 25, wherein shaping the dough intermediate comprises a shaping step selected from the group consisting of stamping, cutting and slicing the dough intermediate.

27. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, wherein applying the plasticizing agent comprises spraying a liquid fat or oil onto the exterior portion of said dough intermediate.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, further comprising:

par-baking the dough intermediate following application of the plasticizing agent; and

freezing the par-baked dough intermediate.

29. (Withdrawn) A dough intermediate comprising:

a plasticizing agent applied to said intermediate to increase fluidity of the dough intermediate and aid in expansion; and

wherein said dough intermediate upon subjecting to a heat or energy treatment step yields a dough product having a Baked Specific Volume of greater than 3 ml/g.

30. (Withdrawn) The dough intermediate of claim 29, wherein the plasticizing agent is selected from the group consisting of a dairy fat, an animal fat, a vegetable oil and combinations thereof.

31. (Withdrawn) The dough intermediate of claim 29, wherein the dough intermediate is a shaped dough intermediate having at least one fissure formed on an exterior portion of the shaped dough intermediate and wherein the plasticizing agent is embedded within the fissure.

32. (Withdrawn) The dough intermediate of claim 29, wherein the dough product has a Baked Specific Volume of greater than 5 ml/g.

33. (Withdrawn) A method of preparing a dough intermediate having improved aesthetic and organoleptic properties, the method comprising:

preparing a dough;  
creating individual dough intermediates from said dough;  
applying a plasticizing agent to a surface of said dough intermediate; and  
baking said dough intermediate to yield a baked product having improved organoleptic and aesthetic properties.

34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33, wherein creating individual dough intermediates includes the formation of one or more fissures on an exterior surface of the individual dough intermediates and wherein the plasticizing agent is embedded within the fissure.

35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33, wherein the applying the plasticizing agent includes spraying the plasticizing agent onto the surface of said dough intermediate.